



United States Senator

MARY L. LANDRIEU
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SENATE PASSES FOREIGN OPERATIONS APPROPRIATIONS

Sen. Landrieu amendment on orphans passes 98-0.

WASHINGTON – The United States Senate passed the Foreign Operations Appropriations bill this afternoon with an amendment by Senator Mary L. Landrieu, D-La., that directs the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to follow the founding principles of the Hague Convention for international adoption. Sen. Landrieu's amendment passed 98-0. The Senate approved the ratification of the Hague Convention in October of 2000, but USAID has yet to incorporate it fully into their mission.

"We must work to build families across the world," said Sen. Landrieu. "The foundations of countries are not built on infrastructure alone; they are built on families and communities. The best way to protect a child from such unimaginable fates as abduction, starvation and sex trafficking is to help connect all children, both at home and abroad, with safe, loving families."

Earlier in the day, Sen. Landrieu spoke on the floor regarding her amendment.

"One of the values that all Americans believe in is the value of family, the importance of family and the importance of the principle that children should in fact be raised by families," Sen. Landrieu said on the Senate floor. "Children don't raise themselves. Governments don't raise children. Parents raise children...and [that's] the way we want to promote it here at home and abroad."

During the Committee markup, a similar amendment sponsored by Sen. Landrieu was included. This amendment provided \$3 million for USAID to develop and fund programs aimed at increasing the capacity of local governments to prevent the abandonment of children and provide permanent options to children who are orphaned.

In January of this year, Sen. Landrieu traveled to the tsunami-ravaged region of South Asia, where it is conservatively estimated that 1.5 million children were affected by the tragedy. Sen. Landrieu is also a co-chair of the Congressional Adoption Caucus and is focused on the plight of children who are separated or orphaned from their families.